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cartes' *Method* is one of the classics of the history of philosophy, and is, both by its brevity and spirit, preëminently adapted to serve as an introduction to the study of modern thought. With Hume's *Essay*, and Kant's *Prolegomena* it contains more food for genuine creative reflexion than can be gained from the tomes of epigonic technical philosophers of twenty times its size. It is republished in this cheap form to make it accessible to every reader. The publishers have added a brief biographical appreciation of Descartes, and a working bibliography of Descartes-literature. A handsome half-tone reproduction of Franz Hals's portrait of the great philosopher adorns the little volume as frontispiece. μ.

NEW PLANE AND SOLID GEOMETRY. By *Wooster Woodruff Beman*, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Michigan, and *David Eugene Smith*, Principal of the State Normal School at Brockport, New York. Second revised edition. Boston: Ginn and Co. 1899. Pp., 382.

We are pleased to see this second, revised edition of Beman & Smith's Geometry. It is an evidence that the efforts of our most advanced and enlightened educators are receiving their adequate appreciation at the hands of the pedagogic public. The best theoretical endeavors of Germany, France, England, and Italy are here combined with characteristically practical American points of view which lead us to believe that in matters of education we have in the last decade or two been doing work which in the end shall leave us in actual cultural results behind no other nation. We can point, both in this and in other domains, to recent American text-books that, despite our ancient and proverbial shortcomings, still show that the talents entrusted to us have not been given in vain. It is more than a shrewd eclecticism, profiting by the accumulated treasures of European thought, that has inspired that genuine *Aufschwung* of educational effort in modern America which has become so signal a feature of our present life; and we shall not be surprised if the fruits of it react with interest upon the sources whence it has been derived.

The present work is a compromise between the traditional treatment of Euclid and Legendre, and the more natural and heuristic methods of the modern geometers. In the text, the authors have adhered to the ancient, the formal, and the logical method of exposition; in the definitions and the discussions they have made use of the more appropriate and the more realistic machinery of modern research; while in the exercises and examples they have supplemented in so practical a manner the matter of their text as to leave little to be desired from the point of view of a sound evolutionary instruction.

On the appearance of the first edition of this book, we were, we must confess, sceptical as to the pedagogic value of many of its innovations,—especially with regard to certain features of its notation and symbolism,—but since then our doubts have been dispelled by actual experience; and we are of the opinion that supplemented by the tact of a competent and adaptive teacher (and here lies the rub in elementary instruction) this type of text-book will be found to meet the really neces-

sary requirements. Personally, we believe in a *genetic* geometry, developed from the individual (infantile and mature) formal experience of every person, agreeing with the racial and cosmic experience, forming a part of one's total mental life, and not constituting a forced, transitory, and factitious episode of a High-School sojourn, from which nothing remains but the mazy congruence of a couple of stale, flat, and unprofitable triangles, a Pythagorean proposition, and the memory of a grand intellectual opportunity that has been lost. We may leave to the minds of maturity, the magnificent formalism and logic of Euclid, worthy scion of Plato and Aristotle, whose gods even "arithmetised"; but let us give to our children a live acquaintance with that real world of forms which is open to us all in our every-day life and from which the great predecessors of Euclid too drew; and the catalogue of the Archimedes, the Monges, and the Jacob Steiners, shall be swelled beyond credibility.

For details we must refer to the work itself. The second edition is formally and typographically a vast improvement on the first. T. J. McC.

THE EVOLUTION OF GENERAL IDEAS. By *Th. Ribot*, Professor in the Collège de France. Authorised translation from the French by *Frances A. Welby*. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. 1899. Pp. 231. Price, \$1.25 (6s. 6d.).

This is a characteristic production of M. Ribot,—a study of pure psychology, of the genesis and embryogeny of general ideas, rigorously excluding all that relates to logic, the theory of knowledge, and metaphysics. We are thrown, here, he says, "upon observation, upon the facts wherein mental processes are enunciated, and discovered. Our material, and principal sources of information, lie therefore: (1) for inferior abstracts, in the acts of animals, of children, of uneducated deaf-mutes; (2) for intermediate abstracts, in the development of languages, and the ethnographical documents of primitive or half-civilised peoples; (3) for superior abstracts, in the progressive constitution of scientific ideas and theories, and of classifications."

"We shall endeavor," further, "to show how the faculty of abstracting and of generalising has been developed empirically, and to follow it in its spontaneous and natural evolution as shown in history,—not in the philosophical speculations which are only its efflorescence, and which, for the most part, ignore or despise its origins."

In the progressive development of the operations of abstraction and generalisation, he finds three main periods: "(1) inferior abstraction, prior to the appearance of speech, independent of words (though not of all signs); (2) intermediate abstraction, accompanied by words, which though at first accessory, increase in importance little by little; (3) superior abstraction, where words alone exist in consciousness, and correspond to a complete substitution."

We have then passed in rapid and brilliant review the main facts of animal,